

ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY ESSAY COMPETITION

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San Fernando.
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Office of the President,
Union Buildings,
Private Bag X1000,
Pretoria,
0001,
South Africa.

Dear Mr. Zuma,

Trinidad and Tobago is the southern-most island of the illustrious Caribbean archipelago, lying northeast of the South American country of Venezuela. Although having a diminutive population of approximately one point three million, Trinidad and Tobago is celebrated as being the “rainbow country” of the Caribbean due to its cosmopolitan nature, reflecting a history of conquest and immigration. Over ten distinctive ethnic backgrounds can be found within this picturesque land rich in culture and harmony.

Blessed with its unique cultures and tastes, Trinidad and Tobago is frequently described as being the “melting pot of cultures.” Where else in the world will one be able to find a country where its inhabitants not only co-exist harmoniously regardless of their racial backgrounds but also carry with them a sense of national pride so boundless that it has taken them to unprecedented heights?

In this magnificent twin-island republic, one will find mosques, churches and temples, all located on the same street. Religion plays an integral part of the lives of the citizens and public holidays are customarily observed for the major festivals including Eid-ul-Fitr, Divali and Christmas. With an exciting calendar of cultural events that is second to none, visitors are guaranteed to encounter one of these inspiring celebrations, regardless of what time of the

year a trip is planned. During the Hindu festival of Divali, children of differing ethnic and religious backdrops are seen partaking in the festivities, lighting diyas and sharing in the enjoyment with their Hindu friends.

Trinidad and Tobago is also the birthplace of the increasingly prominent steel pan in addition to the limbo and calypso music, all which play a significant role in the legendary carnival celebrations. Carnival in Trinidad and Tobago is indubitably an explosion of beauty, vibe and remarkable ingenuity. With its pulsating rhythms, astounding costumes and the indescribable euphoria which comes with being in the action, it is no wonder that our carnival celebrations are largely known as being the greatest show on earth!

Sports are as well, a major element of the 'Trinbagonian' culture. The national football team or the 'Soca Warriors' have made us proud on many an occasion. One such occasion was their participation in the 2006 FIFA World Cup, held in Germany. This was the first time Trinidad and Tobago had ever participated in a World Cup Tournament.

Apart from the racial harmony and the effervescent festivals which Trinidad and Tobago has to offer, there are a myriad of other aspects of this country which we can teach the world. Trinidad and Tobago is rapidly becoming the economic "hot-spot" within the Caribbean region. As the country with the highest GDP in the Caribbean at \$20.99 billion, a thriving oil and natural gas market, as well as influential factors such as having the highest literacy rate in the Caribbean and Latin America of 98.6%, Trinidad and Tobago is well on its way to soon becoming a developed nation.

Despite the problems which our country may face, for instance crime and sometimes corruption, it is important to consider the vast development which the country has undergone in a matter of ten to fifteen years. The economic growth has averaged between 3.2% to 5.5% per annum over the past six years and is continuously rising. The investment boom in the energy sector has stimulated activity in the construction, distribution, and the local manufacturing sectors. It is quite evident that the country is becoming an industrialized nation however its problems and priorities are changing as a result.

Trinidad and Tobago is beyond a doubt a country blessed not only with a rich and fascinating culture, but also with some of the world's most stunning

natural attractions, a beautiful people in addition to potential which can take it to becoming one of the world's next leading economic hot spots in the Western Hemisphere. Mr. Zuma, I hope that my letter has further enlightened you about what my country, Trinidad and Tobago, can teach the world.

Yours respectfully,

Emily Seelochan
Naparima Girls' High School